

## RECREATION AND CONSERVATION FUNDING BOARD SUMMARIZED MEETING AGENDA AND ACTIONS, SEPTEMBER 21-22, 2011

### Agenda Items without Formal Action

Item	Board Request for Follow-up
Item 2: Management Report	Staff will contact member Pete Mayer regarding the review of responses to the RFP for SCORP.
Item 4: Follow-up to June 2011 Discussion of Allowable Uses Policy	The board asked staff to work with a subcommittee to address specific concerns of some members. Staff to report back on progress in November.
Item 5A: Summary of general policy and manual changes	No follow-up actions requested.
Item 5B: Streamlining the grant application process	No follow-up actions requested.
Item 5C: Proposal to change to a written evaluation process in three WWRP categories: Critical Habitat, Riparian Protection, and Urban Wildlife	No follow-up actions requested.
Item 5D: Proposed changes to the evaluation criteria for the WWRP State Lands Restoration category	No follow-up actions requested.
Item 5E: Proposed changes to the evaluation criteria for combination projects in the BFP, FARR, and the WWRP State Parks, Trails and Water Access categories	No follow-up actions requested.
Item 6: Overview of the WDFW Conservation Strategy(ies) and the Relationship to RCFB Grant Programs	No follow-up actions requested.
Item 7A: Conservation projects sponsored by WDFW	No follow-up actions requested.
Item 7B: Recreation projects sponsored by state and local organizations	No follow-up actions requested.
Item 8: Joint Session with the Okanogan County Commissioners	No follow-up actions requested.

### Agenda Items with Formal Action

Item	Formal Action	Board Request for Follow-up
Item 1: Consent Calendar	<a href="#">Resolution 2011-21 APPROVED</a> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approval of Board Meeting Minutes – June 2011</li> <li>Recognition of Volunteers</li> <li>Cost Increase Request: TCSA Hunter Education, RCO #09-1204, Tri-Cities Shooting Association Incorporated</li> </ol>	No follow-up actions requested.
Item 3: Sustainability Policy	<a href="#">Revised Resolution 2011-22 APPROVED</a> Approved sustainability policy, effective with the 2012 grant cycle.	No follow-up actions requested.

# RECREATION AND CONSERVATION FUNDING BOARD SUMMARY MINUTES

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Date: September 21, 2011

Place: Commissioners' Hearing Room, Okanogan, WA

## Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Members Present:

<b>Bill Chapman, Chair</b>	Mercer Island	<b>Stephen Saunders</b>	Designee, Department of Natural Resources
<b>Betsy Bloomfield</b>	Yakima	<b>Don Hoch</b>	Director, State Parks
<b>Steven Drew</b>	Olympia	<b>Dave Brittell</b>	Designee, Department of Fish and Wildlife
<b>Pete Mayer</b>	Vancouver		

*Member Harriet Spanel was excused.*

**It is intended that this summary be used with the notebook provided in advance of the meeting. A recording is retained by RCO as the formal record of meeting.**

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## Opening and Management Reports

Chair Bill Chapman called the meeting to order at 1:45 p.m. Staff called roll, and a quorum was determined. Okanogan County Commissioner Andy Lampe was in attendance.

**The agenda was approved as presented.**

### Item 1: Consent Calendar

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) reviewed Resolution #2011-21, Consent Calendar. The consent calendar included the following:

- Approval of Board Meeting Minutes – June 2011
- Recognition of Volunteers
- Cost Increase Request: TCSA Hunter Education, RCO #09-1204, Tri-Cities Shooting Association Incorporated

**Resolution 2011-21 introduced by Chair Chapman. Resolution APPROVED.**

### Item 2: Management Report

Director Cottingham reviewed her management report, noting the recent webinar on grant opportunities from natural resource agencies, and ribbon cuttings. There are many ribbon cuttings scheduled in the next few weeks. She also discussed the five and ten percent budget reduction exercises, noting that it did not affect the board's programs since the cut is in the general fund, which goes towards salmon recovery programs.

Chair Chapman asked what DFW and DNR would be doing instead of presenting at the recent webinar. Director Cottingham noted that the problem was that the timing of the webinar did not coincide with the timing of the grants available from those agencies.

*Policy Report:* Director Cottingham noted that a request for proposals was out to find a consultant to help with the SCORP development. Member Mayer had asked if a board member or local park representative could assist with the proposal review, provided there is no conflict of interest. The board did not object, so staff will contact him to coordinate that involvement.

Dominga Soliz provided a brief update regarding the Habitat and Recreation Lands Coordinating Group (Lands Group) as presented in the policy report. Commissioner Lampe noted that it is a positive effort.

*Grant Management Report:* Conservation and Grant Services Section Manager Scott Robinson discussed the grant management report (staff memo 2D). He noted in particular the new section of the report that addresses returned funds.

Robinson noted that there were no applications in the BIG Tier 1 program this year, so the RCO requested a grant to update boating information for the public. The US Fish and Wildlife Service has notified the RCO that they have received the grant application.

Robinson also gave an overview of the tour, reminding the board that it would start at 7:30 a.m.

#### State Agency Partner Reports

*Don Hoch, State Parks,* noted the five to ten percent budget plan went to the Commission last week, and that the Commission chose to take it in staff cuts, furloughs, and holding vacancies. They are still waiting to see what the revenue will be from Discover Pass. They think the cut will be more likely around 15 to 20 percent. They feel very optimistic about the revenue from the Discover Pass. The big issue is transferability of the pass; they are talking with the Governor's Office. They do not think the cuts will affect grant-funded efforts.

*Stephen Saunders, Department of Natural Resources (DNR),* noted that the Natural Heritage Program is being cut dramatically in the budget. He noted the purpose and benefit of the program. The Conservation Acquisition program also gets funding from the general fund and has experienced major cuts.

*Dave Brittell, Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW),* noted that the funding from the Discover Pass is about equal between the annual and day use passes. It is not a perfect system, and he expects changes in the upcoming legislative session. He discussed the budget cut exercise as well, noting that in 2007-09, they had about \$110 million in general fund dollars; that has been reduced dramatically

over time. Only about 19 percent of the agency is still funded from the general fund. The approach to the cut will be approved by the Fish and Wildlife Commission tomorrow.

#### General Public Comment

*Berent Culp, Okanogan Land Trust*, noted that farmland preservation was not an agenda item and he is very concerned about it. He stated that the United States is losing more than an acre of farmland per minute. The amount of public land versus private land is a concern. Director Cottingham noted that Mr. Culp was welcome to join the board on its tour tomorrow. The Ellis Barnes project will receive funding from other projects, and the farmland preservation discussion will happen at that site.

*Rocklynn Culp, Town of Winthrop*, thanked the board for its support and noted that they are having a very good experience with their grant manager. They are building a trail and a bridge, and they very excited about the project and the changes it is bringing to their community.

*Darlene Hajny, Okanogan County Farm Bureau*, noted that they had just learned about the board's visit yesterday. She noted that the board has a very narrow mandate, while the commissioners have to look at the cumulative impact of what happens in the county. The public is concerned about the amount of land going into public ownership, and that the path is unsustainable because of the ongoing costs of the property. The costs include restoration, maintenance, operation, and management in perpetuity. The local jurisdiction review doesn't happen in Okanogan County; that is, they don't learn about projects until deals are in place.

*Steve Lorz, Tonasket*, noted that people he knows are no longer using state lands because of the cost of the Discover Pass.

## **Board Decisions**

### Item 3: Sustainability Policy

Director Cottingham introduced this topic, and provided some background and history. Grant manager Myra Barker then presented the policy proposal, as described in the memo as well as examples of sponsors' uses of sustainable practices. Myra will be the staff point person for sustainability issues. Member Mayer noted that this is an opportunity to collaborate with landscape architects.

Member Drew referenced a trail project that, in an effort to promote sustainability, used treated materials that were in contact with soil. He is concerned that the scoring may benefit longevity at the expense of environmental consideration. Barker responded that it would be a good example to share with sponsors. Chair Chapman noted that the board had previously agreed not to be prescriptive, and to let the sponsors figure out what works well. There simply is not enough information to set standards of the best way to do projects. Member Bloomfield stated that the policy allows for the project evaluation to consider situations such as the one raised by Member Drew.

**Revised Resolution 2011-22 moved by Chapman and seconded by: Drew  
Resolution APPROVED**

## Board Briefings

### Item 4: Follow-up to June 2011 Discussion of Allowable Uses Policy

Dominga Soliz, Policy Specialist, presented information about the policy, as described in the board memo. She noted that the proposal sets up a framework (process) for addressing the "gray areas" in existing policy but does not establish new allowable uses. She requested board input so that the policy can be put forward for approval in November.

Member Mayer asked for clarification of terms used in the policy and presentation, including "consistent with," "minimum impairment," and "primary purpose." He was particularly concerned about an assessment beyond the physical location of the project and the consideration of other sites in the determination of obsolescence in the first example. He also questioned the definitions of lease, agreement, and license as a transfer of property rights; he would like staff to reconsider it.

Member Brittell noted that they have to protect the investments, but he is worried that the gray area may be overbroad. He wants to ensure that land managers can do their jobs, without having to check with RCO on every action. He echoed confusion about the use of lease, license, and other terms. He also does not think that the policy allows them to keep the lands working, especially with regard to the grazing examples.

Member Bloomfield asked how much resource management and expertise will staff need under this policy to address allowability. Director Cottingham noted that the director makes the decision about calling in experts so that they do not get called too often.

Member Drew suggested changes to the "all practical alternatives" language to include showing documentation of the analysis.

Member Saunders suggested that a consideration still needs to include convenience versus necessity. Like Member Brittell, he is concerned that the policy could affect their ability to keep lands working.

The board determined that a subcommittee should work with staff to address specific concerns such as grazing and leases. Members Mayer, Brittell, and Drew were selected to participate.

### Item 5: Changes Proposed for the 2012 Grant Cycle

Scott Robinson and Marguerite Austin presented the significant policy proposals noted in the board memos, as follows. Items 5A, 5D, and 5E were not presented due to time constraints.

*Streamline the grant application process:* Marguerite Austin presented information about streamlining the grant application process, as described in staff memo 5B. The proposed improvements fall into one of three categories: policy changes that require board approval, process changes that require

director approval, and administrative changes designed to capture efficiencies for applicants and staff. The board had no comments or questions.

*Proposal to change to a written evaluation process:* Scott Robinson presented a proposal to (1) eliminate project review meetings, and (2) conduct a written evaluation process, as described in staff memo 5C. The changes would affect the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program Critical Habitat and Urban Wildlife categories and the Riparian Protection Account. He noted that the changes should reduce the time and resources committed to project review and evaluation without losing the effectiveness of the process. The proposal has not yet been published for public comment. Member Saunders noted that DNR has had a good experience moving to a written process in the Natural Areas program, it saves staff time, and focuses the evaluation on the project rather than the ability of the presenter to sell the project.

#### Item 6: Overview of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Conservation Strategy(ies) and the Relationship to RCFB Grant Programs

*Board member Don Hoch left the meeting at this point. Okanogan County Commissioner Bud Hover joined the discussion.*

Member Brittell presented information about landscape conservation in Okanogan County and projects sponsored by Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. WDFW manages 900,000 acres and 700 access sites in the state. He noted that WDFW uses conservation easements for development rights so that the property remains in private ownership; recently, they have tried to also bundle water rights into the easements. He covered the history and funding of WDFW presence, land management, and other activities (e.g., recreation projects) in Okanogan County. He noted how it has changed from opportunistic to strategic, and how they have changed their approach to include more public involvement. Brittell emphasized that they work with willing sellers and try to use the acquisition tool (easement or fee simple) that works best for both the landowner and the agency.

Brittell noted that WDFW needs to expand the discussion to have a broader public perspective, and they that they are doing more outreach, including surveys. He addressed three common concerns – local revenue, economic analyses (how agency actions affect the future of the county), and care of the lands – and how they affect Okanogan County. He concluded by noting the projects that they would see on the project tour the following day.

#### Item 7: Board-funded Projects in Okanogan County

Dave Brittell discussed Item 7A (Conservation projects sponsored by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife) with his overview in Item 6.

Myra Barker presented recreation projects supported by board-funded grants in Okanogan County, as described in staff memo 7B. She highlighted the funding, specific projects, and the various organizations that have received grant funding.

Member Drew asked Member Brittell to describe what is happening at the legislature regarding payment in lieu of taxes (PILT). Brittell responded that there has been significant dialogue, but there has been no major action in the last few years. The issue arises in budget discussions more than it does in the policy discussions.

Commissioner Hover asked whether the state has looked at the impact on the state budget for land that goes into public ownership – both from tax loss and from ongoing maintenance fees. Brittell asked Jennifer Quan, Lands Division Manager for WDFW, to respond, but she stated that she did not know the answer.

Hover noted that the county prefers easements to fee simple because it keeps the property in private hands and continues the use, but respects that individual property owners have the right to make the choice that works for them. The state needs to consider what is left in the county after all of the public ownership, including federal and tribal. The county needs an approach that lessens the concerns about changes in state priorities in the future and allows the county to remain financially viable.

#### Item 8: Joint Session with the Okanogan County Commissioners

Okanogan County Commissioners Andy Lampe and Bud Hover participated in the discussion.

Commissioner Lampe welcomed the board to the county. Chair Chapman thanked him, and noted that it is important for the board to see the projects and listen to people across the state. He noted four questions on the agenda and invited the commissioners to discuss whatever is on their mind.

Commissioner Lampe noted that the Lands Group has played a very positive role in getting the agencies to talk to each other. The RCO has changed the questions that agencies ask and is making the agencies justify their requests and do a better job. Lampe would like the Lands Group to continue because of the positive role it plays in getting agencies to talk and share their plans. Chapman concurred, and noted that he has had positive conversations with Senator Parlette about the group continuing.

Commissioner Lampe also noted that he would like to see an increase in monitoring to ensure projects are meeting expectations. He stated that costs of maintenance, weed control, and related work should be built into the grants. Alternatively, the applicants should demonstrate that they have the funds to do the maintenance. If the state doesn't do the work, the cost is passed on to adjacent private landowners.

Commissioner Hover noted that the trails and recreation funded by the board have been very welcome. They cannot change to a tourism-based economy, but it is still a recognized benefit to the county. He noted his work with the Salmon Recovery Funding Board, and the need to balance the perspectives. For example, as a commissioner, he is concerned about land going into public ownership, but he is also concerned about how to address the salmon listings so that agriculture can

be protected. Hover said that their concern is the long-term economic impact of moving land from private to public ownership because their economy is based on agriculture, mining, and ranching. They need to know what the plans are.

Member Drew noted that PILT is a better compensation in counties that don't have such a high percentage of land in public ownership. He asked if there had been any analysis of different compensation for counties where there is a higher impact. Member Brittell responded that there had been legislative discussion regularly, but it never evolves into a policy discussion or action.

Chair Chapman asked what the county's plans and priorities are. Commissioner Hover noted that recreation is important for locals and for visitors; people want to visit the open space. It is important to maintain enough opportunities that people still have the space they value.

Chair Chapman then asked if they are experiencing any roadblocks or problems. Commissioner Lampe invited Ted Murray to respond. He noted that the grant match amount is a very tough obstacle.

Member Mayer noted that counties in his area face a similar struggle with regard to public and private ownership. They have sought legislative fixes such as using conservation futures and REET to help local agencies cover operations and maintenance. He thinks a challenge for the board will be how to fund the ongoing stewardship so that public expenditures are better leveraged.

Commissioner Lampe responded that you can't compare local maintenance issues to WDFW not maintaining the huge blocks of land that they purchase. He also noted that public lands need to stay open for motorized recreation, because people who participate in motorized recreation spend more money locally than those who participate in non-motorized recreation.

Commissioner Hover noted that agriculture is not antithetical to habitat and wildlife conservation. Most are not farmed fence line to fence line; they have wild areas. He encouraged the board and state agencies to contract out the weed control and maintenance work to the nearby farmers and ranchers.

Member Bloomfield noted that the county is providing a huge recreational value that is uncompensated and that there needs to be a better conversation in the state about compensation for those values. Ecosystem services could be one way to get there in the future; they can be applied to public and private lands.

#### Public Comment on Items 6, 7, and 8

*Jason Paulsen, Methow Conservancy*, noted the policy work on allowable uses and synching the issues. He thanked the board for addressing those issues. He noted that they work with SRFB and WWRP Farmland grants. They are cosponsors on several projects and appreciate the partnerships. He noted



that the low-hanging fruit has been picked, nothing easy is left; he stated that the staff is great to work with and seem to want to help the local sponsors.

*John Sunderland* declined to comment, stating that Jason had covered what he wanted to say.

*Kurt Danison, Planner for Small cities in Okanogan County*, stated RCFB grants have encouraged planning by local communities. He noted that a barrier for many communities is keeping up the pools and parks after they exceed their useful life. All available funds are spent on maintenance, so they don't have matching funds for redevelopment. They can't close locations to build up the match funds because the board requires access. Member Drew asked if they had thought about a utility tax, which could gradually build a reserve. Director Cottingham noted that Commerce had programs that might be used as match.

*Maggie Coon, WWRC*, asked the county commissioners to continue to support WWRP. She noted that the program was created 20 years ago by a broad group of citizens who wanted to look forward and meet the needs of the state for the future. The program is accountable and has withstood the test of time. As a resident of the Methow Valley, she does not think there is a single place you can stand without seeing the benefit of the WWRP.

*Jay Kehne, Conservation Northwest*, stated that RCO dollars are valuable to the community, helping to protect wildlife and create recreation opportunities, including hunting. He noted that the programs work only with willing sellers, and appreciates that they have options. He thanked the board for their work.

*Walter Henze, Okanogan Land Trust*, thanked the board and discussed some projects that the trust has been involved in. The RCO is very solution oriented, and they appreciate it. As a citizen and trail user, he appreciated Ted Murray's comments and wonders if there is a way to connect the trails and conservation.

*Mitch Friedman, Conservation Northwest*, expressed his appreciation to the board and staff. The system works well. He noted that in working with property owners in many counties, he has a sense that it's a real challenge to be successful in agriculture. This program keeps agriculture an option for landowners. He also thinks that NOVA is in a key position to balance the needs motorized recreation opportunities with the need to maintain those opportunities; he suggested a less dispersed infrastructure for motorized recreation.

*Charley Knox, Cottage Grove, Oregon*, noted that he hunts and fishes in Okanogan County. He thinks conservation is very important. He fully supports efforts of groups like Conservation Northwest, and asked the board to focus on conservation easements.

**Meeting recessed for the evening at 6:15 p.m.**

## RECREATION AND CONSERVATION FUNDING BOARD SUMMARY MINUTES

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Date: September 22, 2011

Place: Okanogan County

### Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Members Present:

<b>Bill Chapman, Chair</b>	Mercer Island	<b>Stephen Saunders</b>	Designee, Department of Natural Resources
<b>Betsy Bloomfield</b>	Yakima	<b>Dave Brittell</b>	Designee, Department of Fish and Wildlife
<b>Pete Mayer</b>	Vancouver		
<b>Steven Drew</b>	Olympia		

It is intended that this summary be used with the notebook provided in advance of the meeting.

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### Project Tour

Board members and staff participated in a tour of board-funded projects in Okanogan County from 7:30 a.m. until 3:00 p.m.

**Meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.**

Approved by:

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Bill Chapman, Chair

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Date

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board  
Resolution #2011-21  
September 2011 Consent Agenda

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the following September 2011 Consent Agenda items are approved:

- a. Approval of Board Meeting Minutes – June 2011
- b. Recognition of Volunteers
- c. Cost Increase Request: TCSA Hunter Education, RCO #09-1204, Tri-Cities Shooting Association Incorporated

Resolution introduced by: Chair Chapman

Adopted/Defeated/Deferred (underline one)

Date: September 21, 2011

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board  
Revised Resolution #2011-22  
Encouraging Greater Use of Sustainable Practices

**WHEREAS**, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) asked the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) staff to find ways to encourage greater use of sustainable practices in grant-funded projects; and

**WHEREAS**, RCO staff revised evaluation questions to include consideration of sustainable design, practices, and elements for projects submitted in the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and to the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) Local Park and State Park categories; and

**WHEREAS**, RCO staff circulated the policy and revised questions for public comment and received a positive response from stakeholders; and

**WHEREAS**, adopting this policy and establishing incentives for increased use of sustainable practices in grant-funded projects supports the board's strategy to maximize the useful life of board funded projects and its objective to support activities that promote continuous quality improvement; and

**WHEREAS**, the board's three-pronged approach to sustainability is directly supportive of all three of the board's goals, as stated in its strategic plan: (1) We help our partners protect, restore, and develop habitat and recreation opportunities that benefit people, fish and wildlife, and ecosystems; (2) We achieve a high level of accountability in managing the resources and responsibilities entrusted to us; (3) We deliver successful projects by using broad public participation and feedback, monitoring, assessment, and adaptive management.;

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the board does hereby adopt the revised evaluation questions and scoring shown in Attachment B to the September 2011 memo regarding sustainability; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the board directs RCO staff to incorporate these evaluation questions into the appropriate policy manuals; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that these policies shall be effective beginning with the 2012 grant cycle; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the board directs RCO staff to proceed with implementation of the web site enhancements and sponsor outreach efforts associated with sustainability.

Resolution moved by: Chair Chapman

Resolution seconded by: Member Drew

Adopted/Defeated/Deferred (underline one)

Date: September 21, 2011